UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1911
9 June 1995

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council extends UNAMIR for six months and adjusts mandate in light of situation in Rwanda; force level to be reduced to 1,800 troops within four months.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council accept proposal by France, Netherlands and United Kingdom to reinforce UNPROFOR; says Force's authorized strength should be increased by 12,500 troops.

* UNHCR and Bosnian Serb authorities reach agreement on resumption of humanitarian deliveries to Sarajevo; Bosnian Serbs to inspect convoys only once and guarantee security of drivers.

* UNPROFOR reports decrease in military activity in Sarjevo, but increase in attacks on United Nations vehicles.

* Special Representative Khan says reconciliation in Rwanda requires voluntary return of two million refugees; cross-border military infiltration is destabilizing factor.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) for six months to 8 December. It decided to reduce the force level to 2,330 troops within three months, and to 1,800 troops within four months, but maintained the current level of military observers and civilian police personnel. It also decided to adjust UNAMIR's mandate in the light of the current situation in Rwanda. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 997 (1995).

Under the adjusted mandate, UNAMIR will exercise its good offices to help achieve national reconciliation within the frame of reference of the Arusha Peace Agreement. It will assist the Rwandan Government in facilitating the voluntary and safe return

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of refugees and their reintegration. To that end, the Mission will support the Government's efforts to promote a climate of confidence by performing monitoring tasks.

UNAMIR will also support humanitarian deliveries, and provide assistance in engineering, logistics, medical care and demining. It will also assist the training of a national police force until the Rwandan Government enters into bilateral arrangements for other training programmes. The Mission will contribute to the security of United Nations agencies and the International Tribunal for Rwanda, and of humanitarian agencies in cases of need.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today said that the Security Council should accept the proposal put forward by France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to provide military reinforcements for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The three countries offered a rapid reaction force of some 15,000 troops, of whom 2,500 are already in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Secretary-General made his recommendation in a letter to the President of the Council.

The Secretary-General said that if the Council accepted the proposal, it would need to increase UNPROFOR's authorized strength by 12,500. That figure would include 4,000 troops in the French stand-by brigade, who would not be deployed unless and until their presence in the theatre became necessary. The proposed reinforcement would bring the total authorized strength of United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) to 57,370 troops.

The proposal put forward by the three countries would provide the UNPROFOR Commander with well-armed and mobile forces, allowing him to respond promptly to threats to United Nations personnel. However, the Secretary-General continued, the Force must remain a peace-keeping mission. The proposed reinforcement would not alter the fact that UNPROFOR could not by itself end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its role was to create conditions in which progress could be made towards a peaceful settlement, to help implement agreements that were reached, and to support efforts to relieve human suffering. It was therefore essential that the reinforcement of UNPROFOR be accompanied by a determined effort to revive the peace process.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Bosnian Serb authorities today reached an agreement to allow the resumption of humanitarian aid deliveries by land to Sarajevo. The agreement came at a critical time, as the agencies food supplies in the city had been almost exhausted after a two-week interruption in those deliveries.

According to the agreement, UNHCR convoys will resume from Melkovic via Kiseljak to both Government and Serb-held parts of Sarajevo as soon as possible. The Bosnian Serb authorities will inspect the convoys only once. They will guarantee the security of the drivers, and will escort them across Serb-held territory to Sarajevo and Raljivac. The agreement also applies to UNHCR convoys to the Serb-held area of Trebinja in south-east Bosnia.

A United Nations spokesman said that the situation in Sarajevo remained desperate despite today's agreement. He noted that the city's residents had insufficient water, gas and electricity, and that the danger from sniping and other firing remained high.

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There was a decrease in the level of military activity in and around Sarjevo today, according to a United Nations spokesman. Only 574 firing incidents were reported over a 24-hour period, down from 1,800 the previous day. However, there was an increase in the number incidents involving United Nations vehicles, particularly on Mount Igman.

The situation in Srebrenica remained tense, especially around the Dutch Battalion observation post, the spokesman continued. Meanwhile, there was relative calm in Croatia, with the exception of Sector South. Two shells landed close to the Kenyan Battalion post there yesterday.

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Any effort at reconciliation in Rwanda must be based on the return of nearly two million refugees from Zaire, Tanzania, Burundi and other countries, according to Special Representative Shahryar Khan. "If we are to see lasting harmony and stability these refugees have to be persuaded to voluntarily come back in dignity and in safety," he told correspondents at Headquarters today. He said the regional conference held in Bujumbura in February had provided excellent recommendations regarding the return of refugees.

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Those responsible for the genocide in Rwanda should be brought quickly to justice, the Special Representative stressed. The International Tribunal for Rwanda was proceeding too slowly, while Rwanda's national justice system had been undermined by the events last year. "Let's get this system going," he said.

Mr. Khan said cross-border military infiltration into Rwanda was a major source of tension and destabilization. It was very important to control or discipline military activity in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The Governments of the countries concerned wanted international support in dealing with that problem, he noted.

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